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From: Russo, Rebecca
Sent: Thur 9/17/2015 6:55:33 PM
Subject: FW: Advance News Release: EPA Seeks Input on Draft Monitoring Plan Following Gold King Mine Release

R8 congressionals notified.

Rebecca A. Russo

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From: Russo, Rebecca
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 12:54 PM
Subject: Advance News Release: EPA Seeks Input on Draft Monitoring Plan Following Gold King Mine Release

Hi all,

I wanted to give you a heads up that the EPA will be releasing a draft conceptual monitoring plan to further evaluate pre- and post-incident conditions following the August 5 Gold King Mine release in Colorado.

“EPA has been sampling conditions since the spill to ensure the safety of residents in the watershed,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “This monitoring plan represents the next phase of this important work, and reflects our commitment to continue working closely with state, local and tribal officials to evaluate the potential impacts of the spill.”

Surface water and sediment have returned to pre-event conditions, but the agency is continuing

water sampling out of an abundance of caution. EPA is seeking input on the draft conceptual monitoring plan from the states of Colorado, New Mexico and Utah; the Navajo Nation, Southern Ute, and Ute Mountain Ute tribes; and local governments in the watersheds. EPA recently held a call with tribal, state, and local officials to discuss the draft plan and solicit their input. EPA has asked for comments from these stakeholders by September 28, so the agency can initiate monitoring this fall. EPA is committed to working with stakeholders to use sound science to monitor the rivers under differing seasonal conditions to determine if fluctuations in contaminant levels reflect pre-spill variability in the watershed.

Sampling activities will include water quality, sediment quality, biological community, and fish tissue under a variety of flow conditions at 23 sites in Cement Creek, the Animas and San Juan rivers and the upper section of Lake Powell within Colorado, Southern Ute Reservation, New Mexico, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, the Navajo Nation, and Utah. Where pre-incident data are available, monitoring at these sites will enable comparison of pre- and post-incident conditions. Where pre-incident data are not available along some river stretches of the San Juan River, EPA will collect data; however, these data may not be able to be used to gauge effects of the Gold King Mine spill as they may reflect contributions from discharges, spills, runoff and erosion over preceding decades.

After collecting data for one year, EPA will review results to determine appropriate next steps. EPA is coordinating with its regulatory partners and affected stakeholders to understand other organizations' monitoring efforts, prevent duplication, and promote data sharing. Additional monitoring and study efforts may occur outside the focused scope of this monitoring plan.

Also today, EPA is releasing an Interim Final Plan for Incident Command Transition. Recognizing that water and sediment are now being maintained at pre-existing conditions, the agency will be scaling down the Incident Command Post in Durango, CO, and transitioning to a long-term operational plan that can be supported by the agency's Regional Offices.

The agency also posted new surface water sampling data collected August 24 and 25, 2015, from locations along the Animas River.

The agency continues to continually update data, documents and other information to the Gold King Mine response website: <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine>

Direct links to the Monitoring Plan and Transition Plan will be posted once the update is live on the Gold King Mine website above.

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